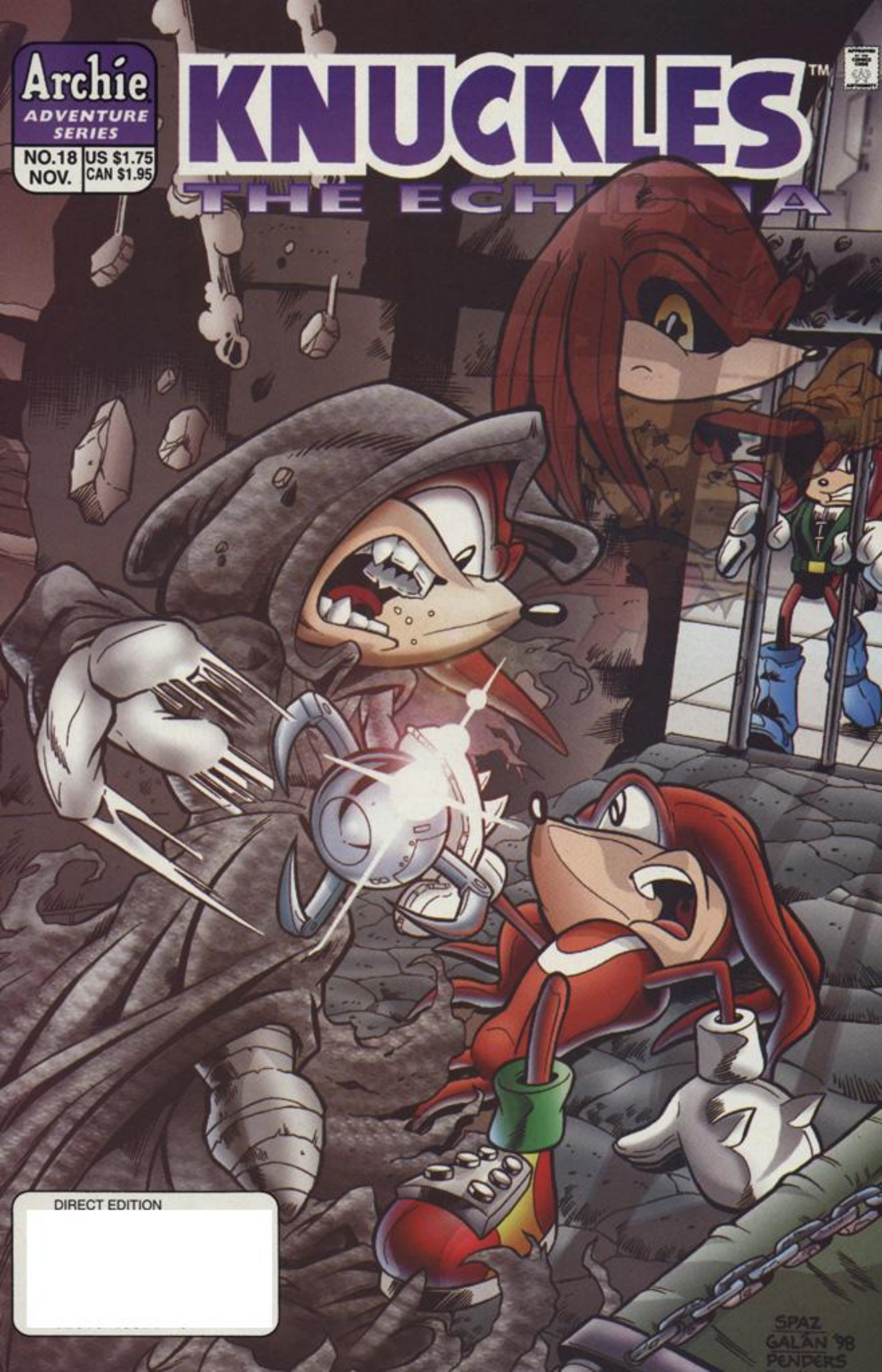


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THE ECHIDNA



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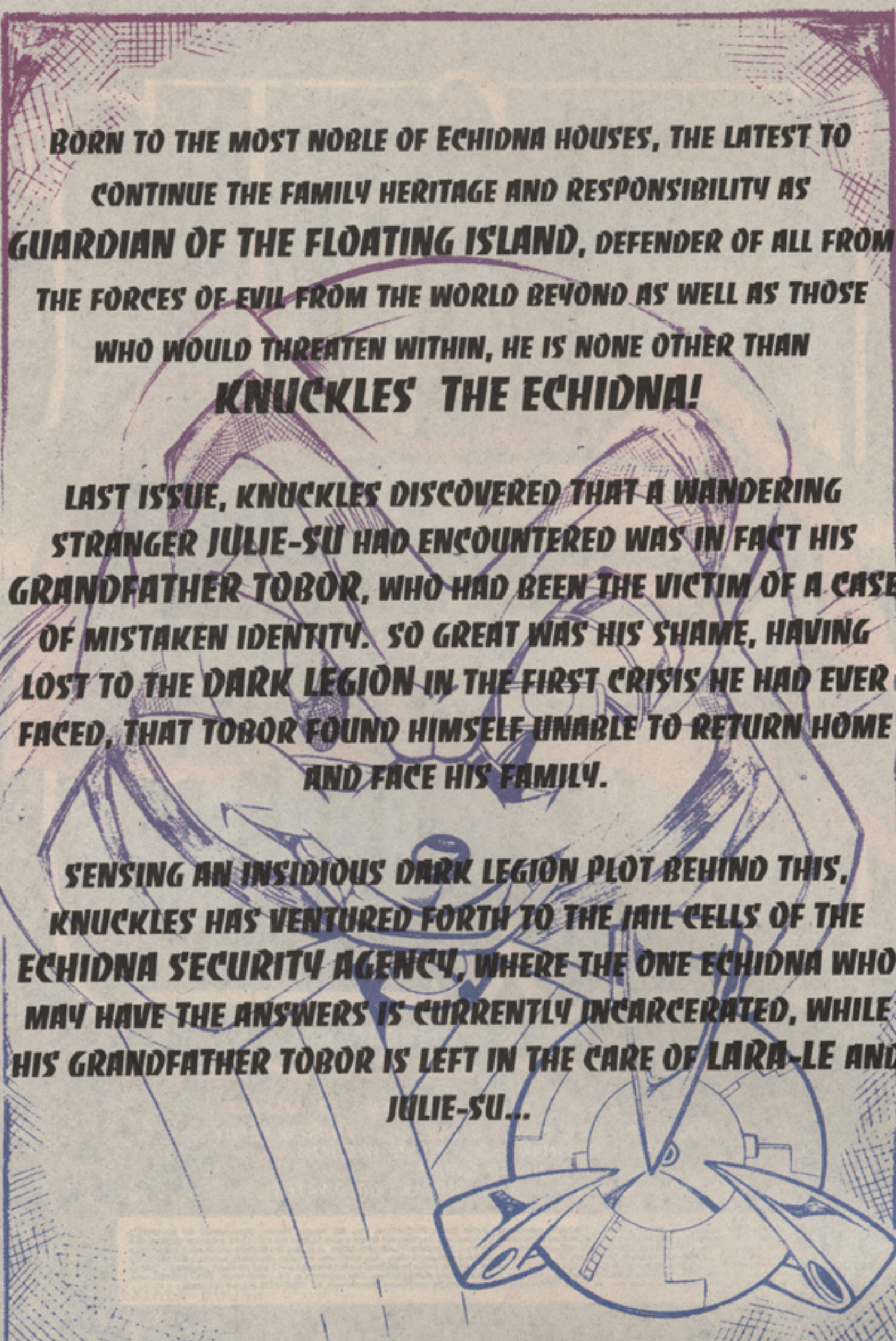
BOOK EIGHTEEN

DEEP COVER

PART TWO OF TWO

KEN PENDERS: WRITER MANNY GALAN: PENCILER ANDREW PEPOY: INKER
 BARRY GROSSMAN: COLORIST VICKIE WILLIAMS: LETTERER
 JUSTIN GABRIE: EDITOR
 VICTOR GORELICK: MANAGING EDITOR RICHARD GOLDWATER: EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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**BORN TO THE MOST NOBLE OF ECHIDNA HOUSES, THE LATEST TO
CONTINUE THE FAMILY HERITAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY AS
GUARDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND, DEFENDER OF ALL FROM
THE FORCES OF EVIL FROM THE WORLD BEYOND AS WELL AS THOSE
WHO WOULD THREATEN WITHIN, HE IS NONE OTHER THAN
KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA!**

**LAST ISSUE, KNUCKLES DISCOVERED THAT A WANDERING
STRANGER JULIE-SU HAD ENCOUNTERED WAS IN FACT HIS
GRANDFATHER TOBOR, WHO HAD BEEN THE VICTIM OF A CASE
OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY. SO GREAT WAS HIS SHAME, HAVING
LOST TO THE DARK LEGION IN THE FIRST CRISIS HE HAD EVER
FACED, THAT TOBOR FOUND HIMSELF UNABLE TO RETURN HOME
AND FACE HIS FAMILY.**

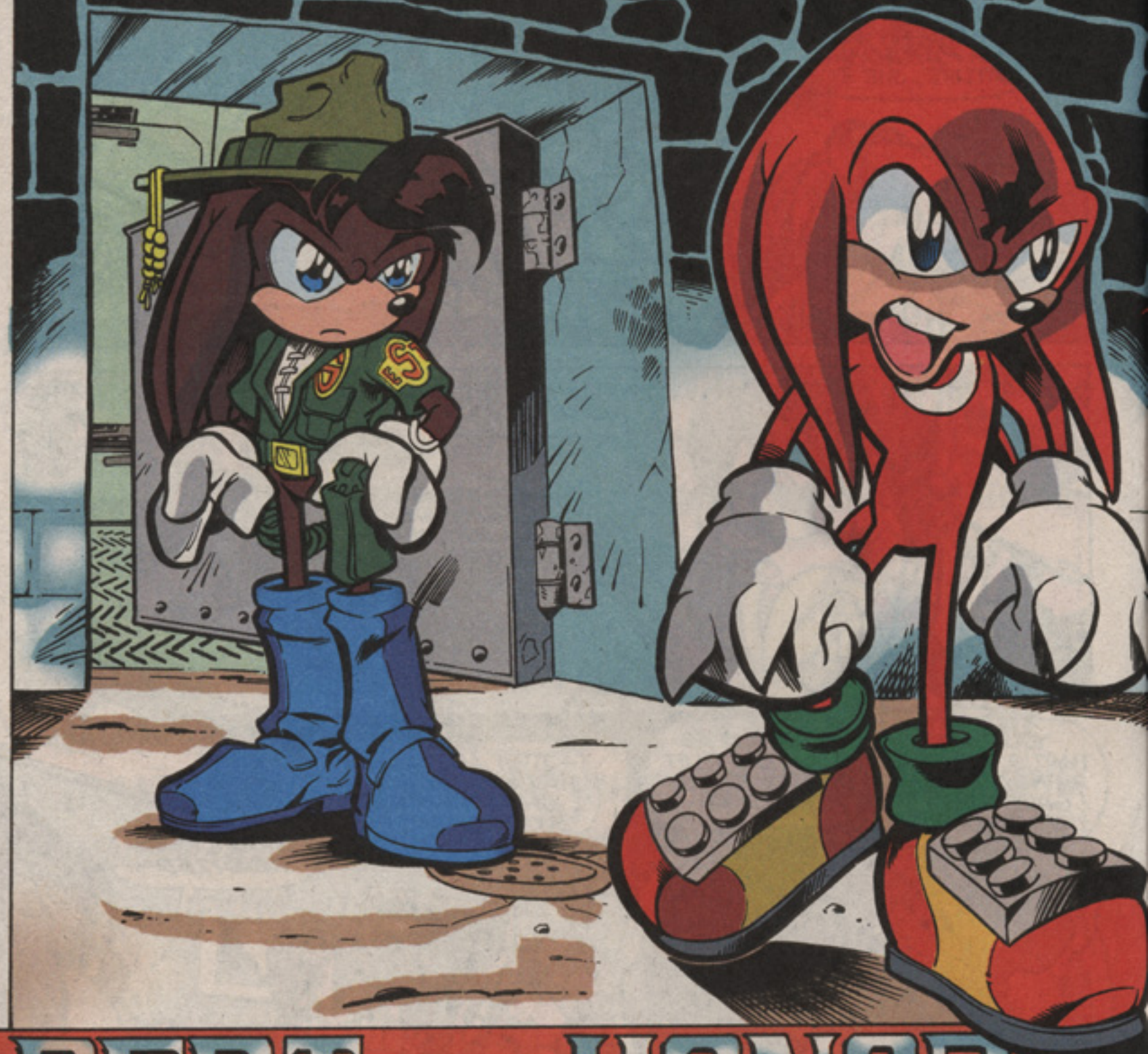
**SENSING AN INSIDIOUS DARK LEGION PLOT BEHIND THIS,
KNUCKLES HAS VENTURED FORTH TO THE JAIL CELLS OF THE
ECHIDNA SECURITY AGENCY, WHERE THE ONE ECHIDNA WHO
MAY HAVE THE ANSWERS IS CURRENTLY INCARCERATED, WHILE
HIS GRANDFATHER TOBOR IS LEFT IN THE CARE OF LARA-LE AND
JULIE-SU...**



--WERE THE DEMANDS AND
SACRIFICES ONE WOULD
IMPOSE ON THE OTHER!"

WE NEED
TO TALK!

WE'LLLLLLLL....



DEBT OF HONOR

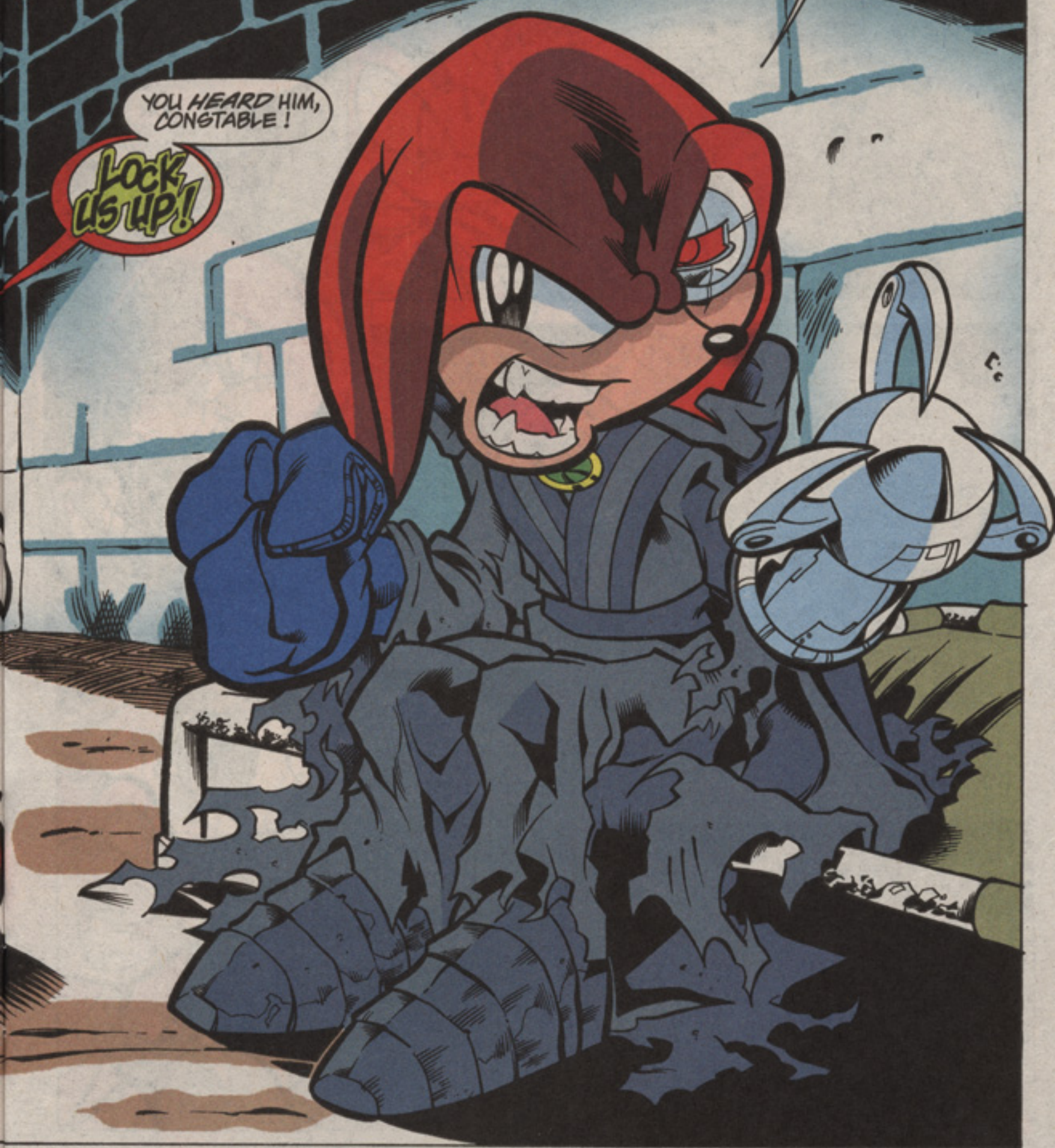
ABOUT
TIME YOU
SHOWED!

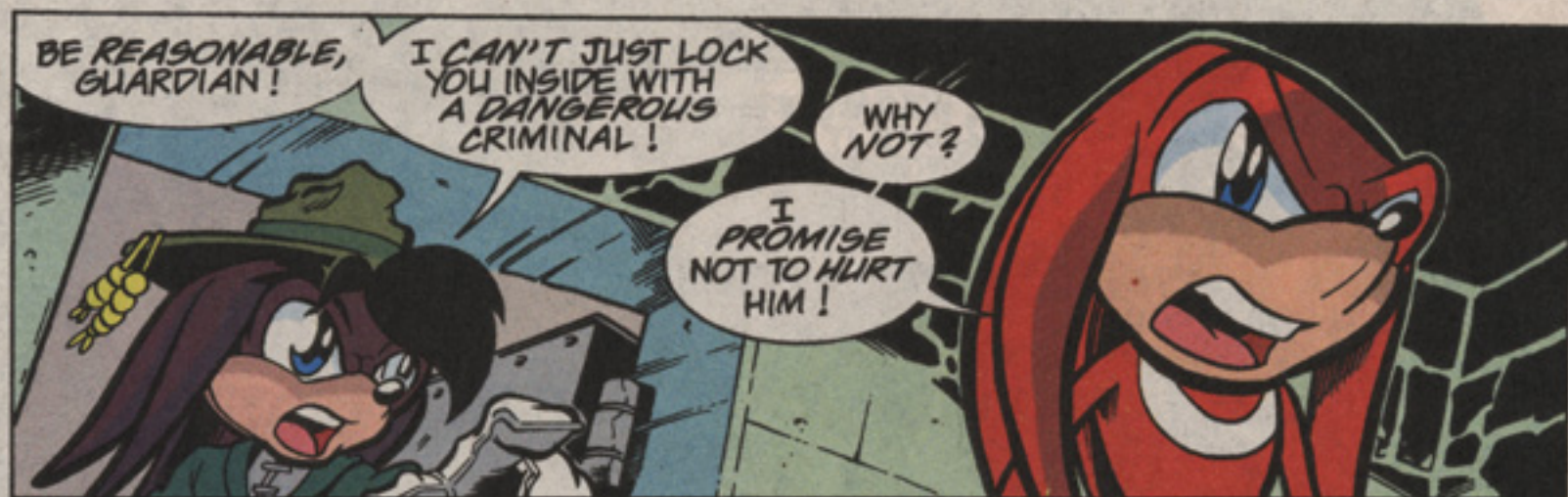
I WAS WONDERING
HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE
BEFORE YOU DECIDED
TO GRACE ME WITH YOUR
PRESENCE!

HOWEVER, IF YOU WISH
TO CONVERSE, IT'S YOU
AND ME, ONE-ON-ONE
ONLY!

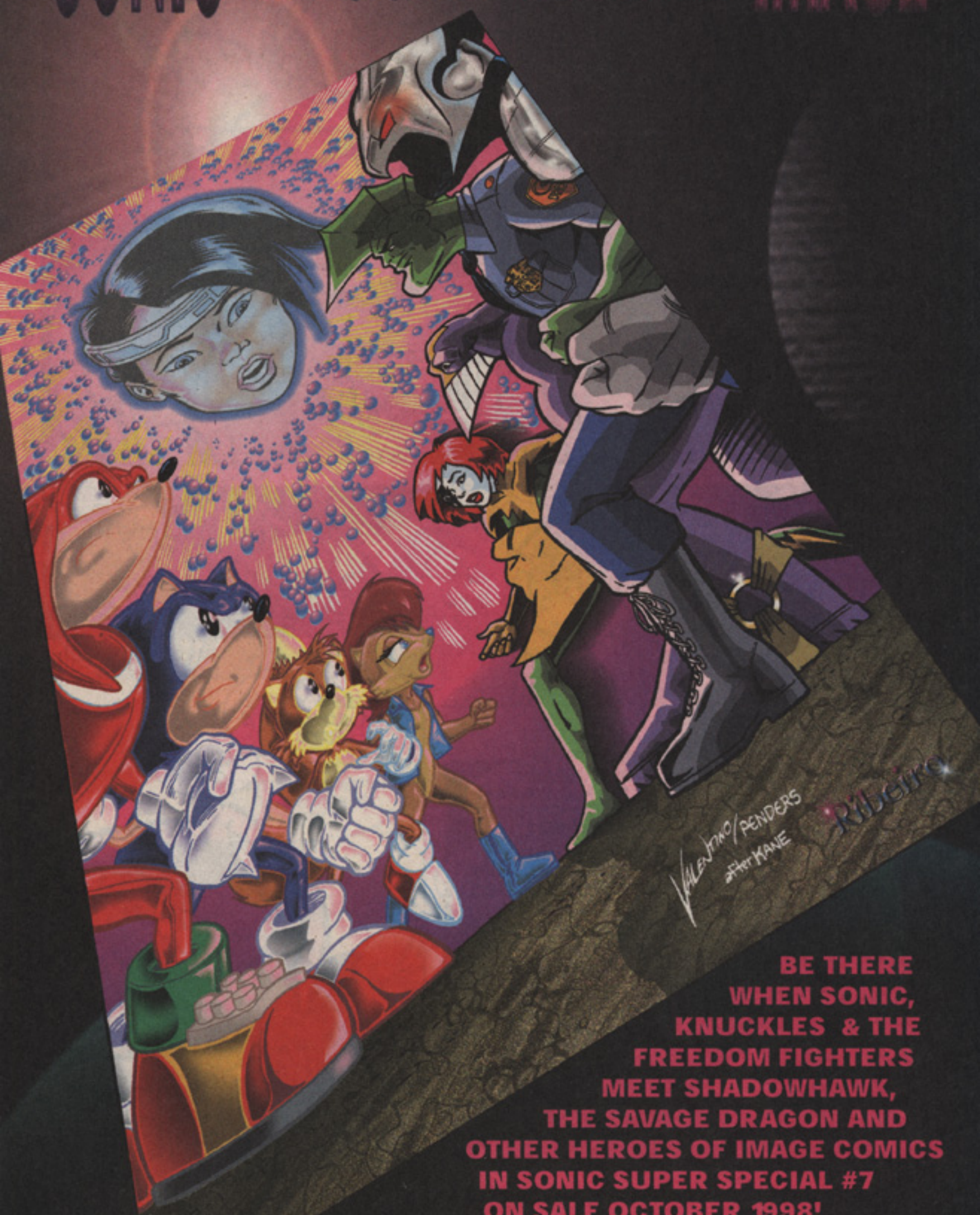
YOU HEARD HIM,
CONSTABLE!

**Lock
us up!**

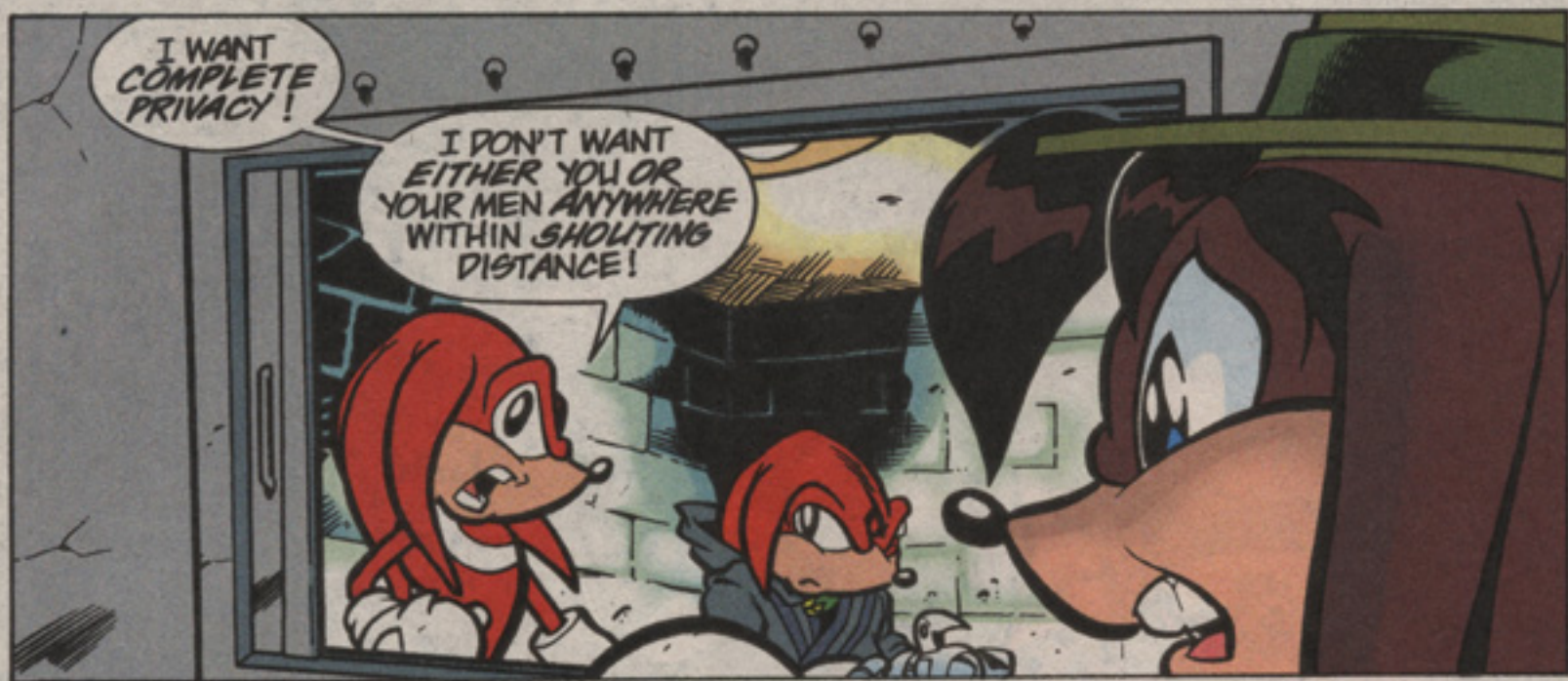


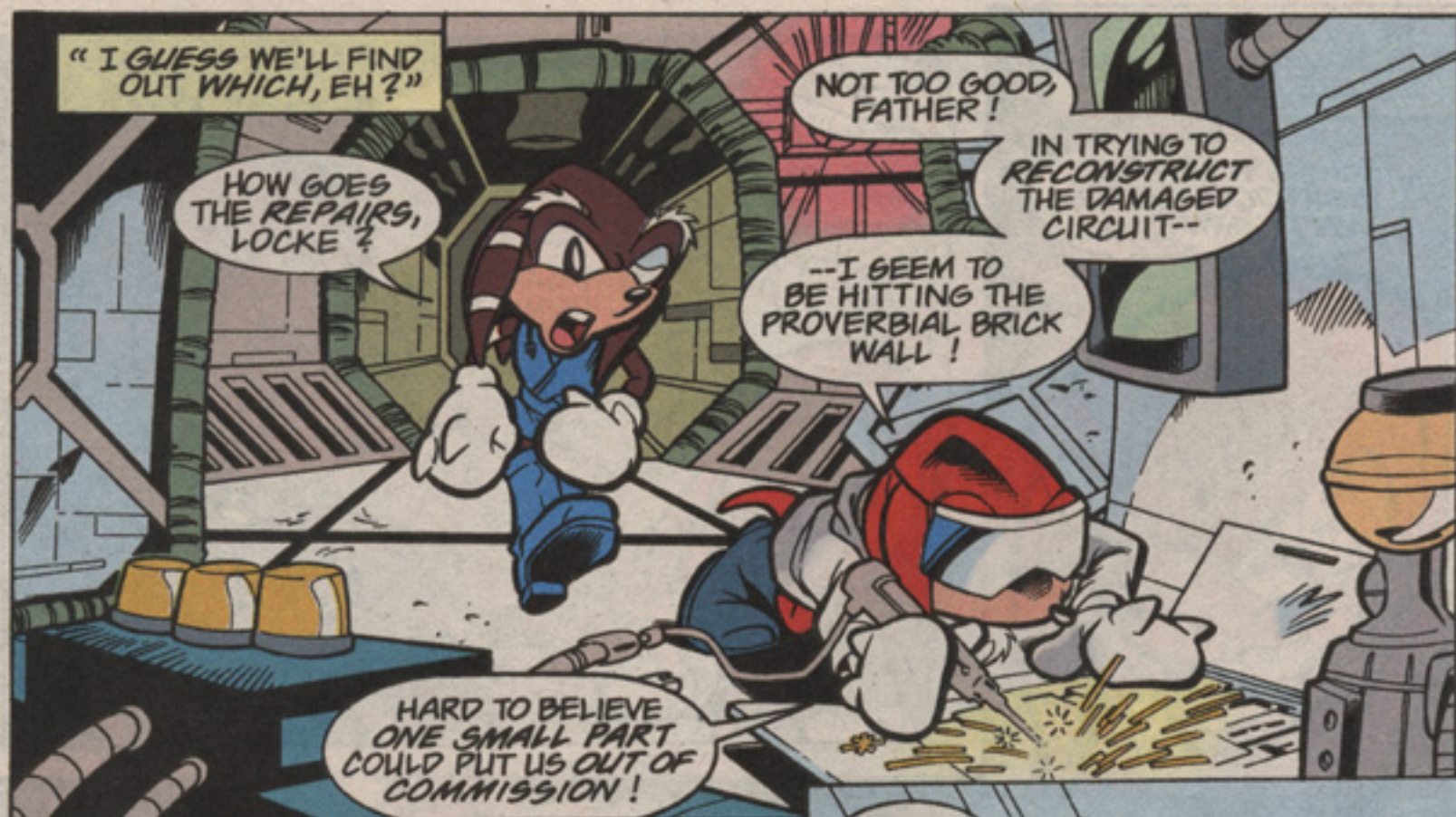


SONIC TAKES ON A WHOLE NEW IMAGE



**BE THERE
WHEN SONIC,
KNUCKLES & THE
FREEDOM FIGHTERS
MEET SHADOWHAWK,
THE SAVAGE DRAGON AND
OTHER HEROES OF IMAGE COMICS
IN SONIC SUPER SPECIAL #7
ON SALE OCTOBER 1998!**





"--WE NEED TO DISCOVER
THE *SOURCE* AND TAKE
CARE OF IT!"

WHY DON'T WE GET
RIGHT DOWN TO THE
NITTY-GRITTY--



--BY HAVING YOU
TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW
ABOUT SOMEONE NAMED
TOBOR!

WHAT MAKES
YOU THINK I
KNOW?



AS A LEADER OF THE
DARK LEGION, I KNOW YOU
HAD ACCESS TO ALL THEIR
SECRETS!

SECRETS NOT
EVERYONE WAS
LET IN ON!

MAYBE
OTHERS
DIDN'T KNOW
TOBOR--

--BUT I'M
BETTING YOU
DO!



EVEN IF I DID
KNOW, WHY SHOULD
I TELL YOU?

WHAT'S IN IT
FOR ME?

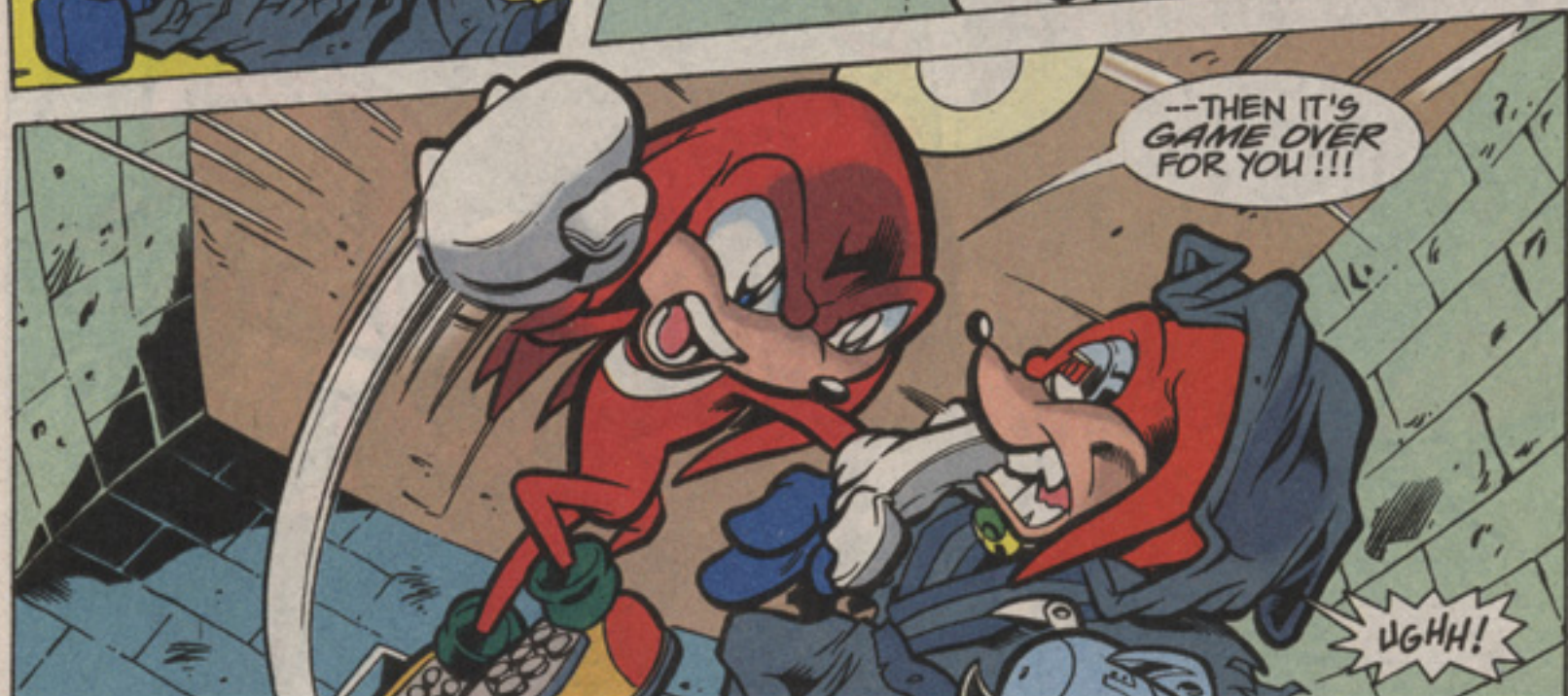
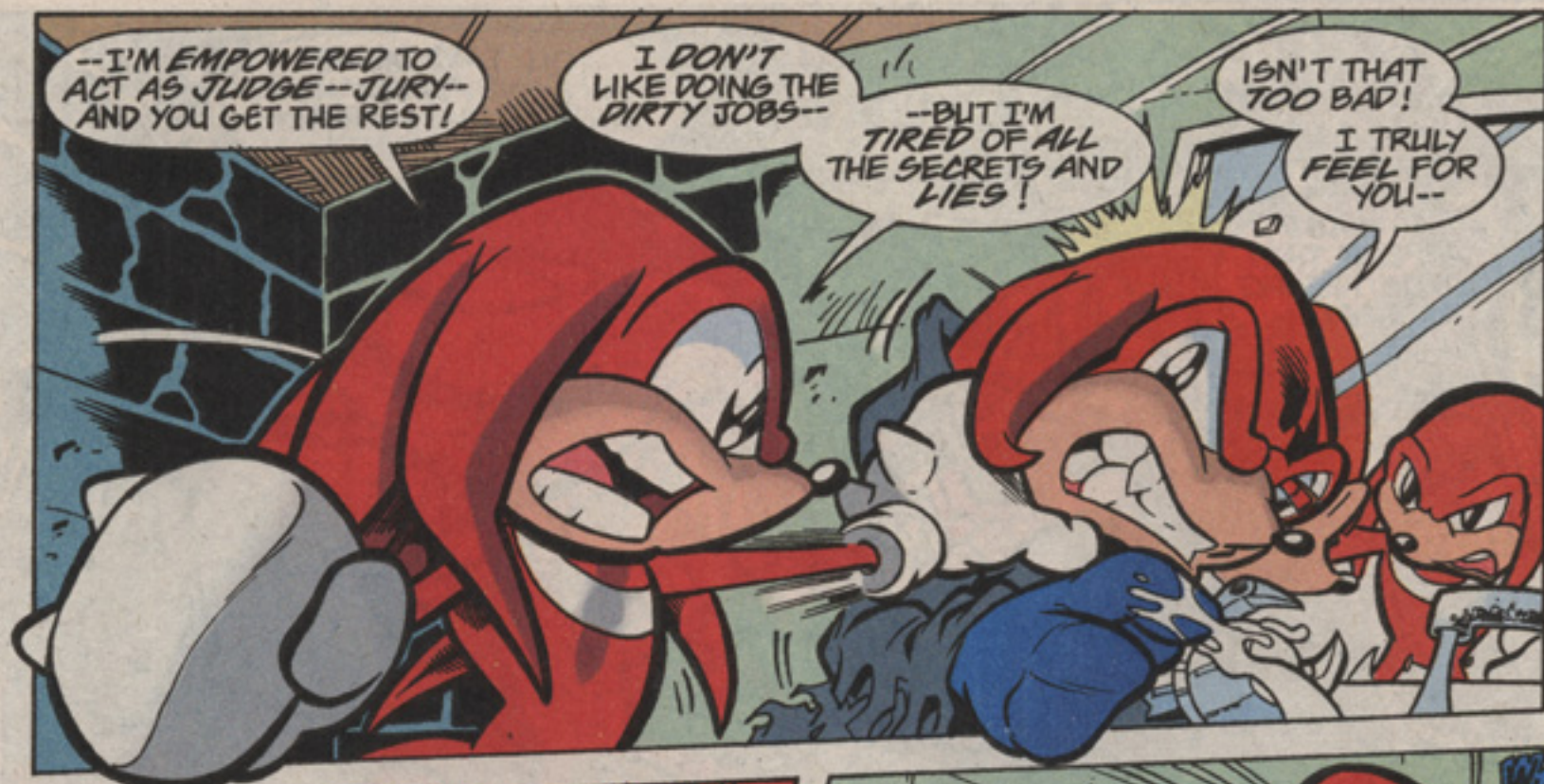


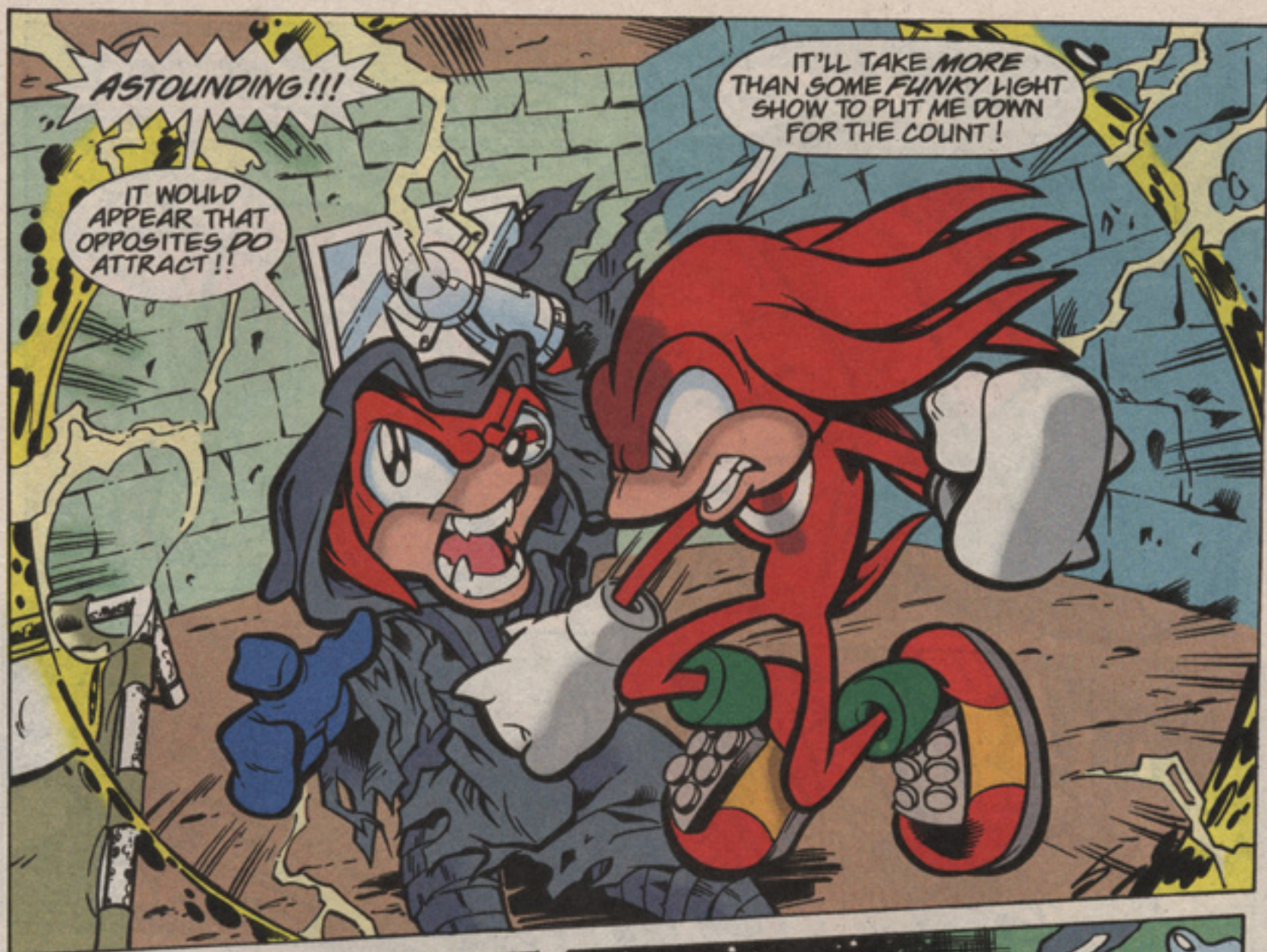
CONSTABLE
REMINGTON MAY BE
BOUND BY THE LETTER
OF THE LAW--

--BUT I'M
NOT!

AS A
GUARDIAN--







ASTOUNDING!!!

IT WOULD
APPEAR THAT
OPPOSITES DO
ATTRACT!!

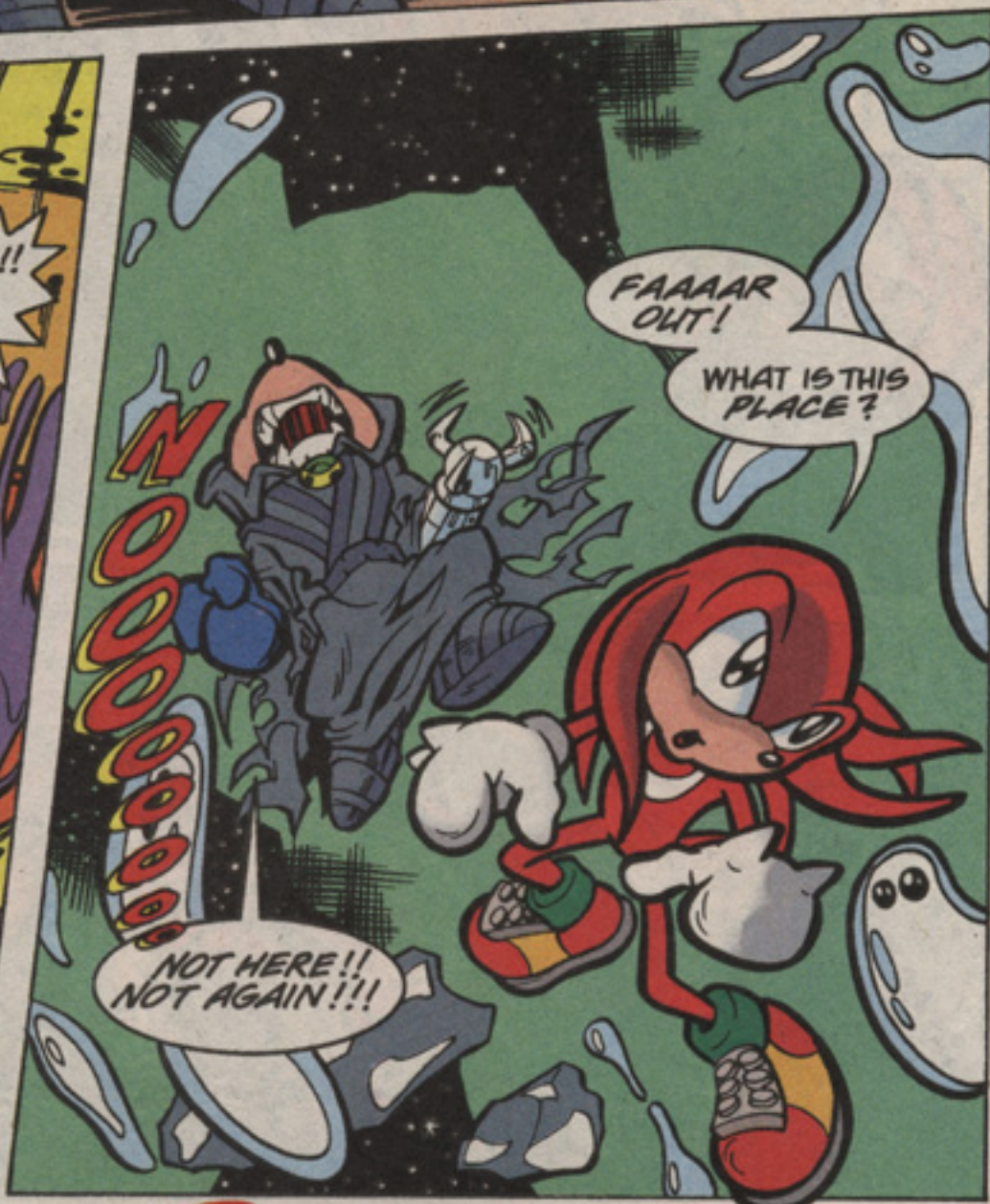
IT'LL TAKE MORE
THAN SOME FUNKY LIGHT
SHOW TO PUT ME DOWN
FOR THE COUNT!



WAIT!!! THIS WASN'T
SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN!!!

NOT TO ME!!
NOT TO
ME!

DON'T YOU
EVER SHUT
UP?!



FAAAAR
OUT!

WHAT IS THIS
PLACE?

NOT HERE!!
NOT AGAIN!!!



"I SWORE I'D NEVER RETURN HERE AGAIN!"

WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND, GRANDFATHER TOBOR--

--IS HOW HAWKING COULD MISTAKE A DARK LEGIONAIRE FOR HIS SON!

AS HARD AS IT IS TO COMPREHEND--

--IT TOOK ONLY THE CRUEL TOUCH OF FATE TO TURN THE UNIMAGINABLE INTO DARK REALITY!

YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER--

"--MORITORI REX AND I ENGAGED IN MORTAL COMBAT--

" WHEN THE SURROUNDING STRUCTURES COLLAPSED UPON US--

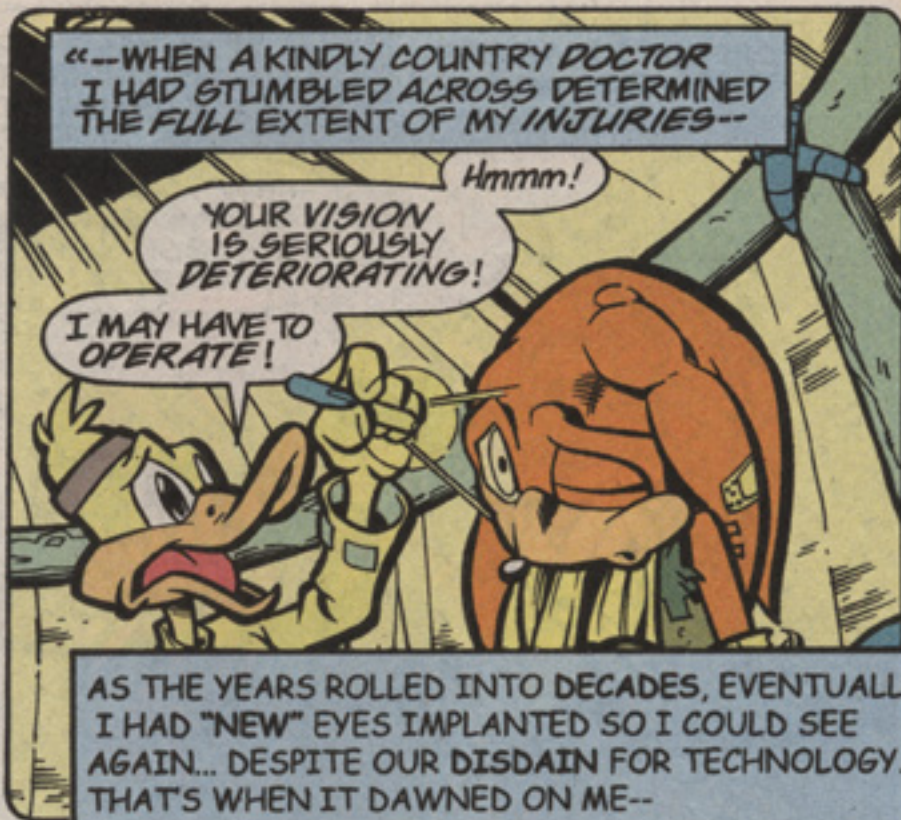
"--A BATTLE IN WHICH BOTH PARTIES NEITHER SOUGHT OR WERE GIVEN ANY QUARTER!

"--THERE WASN'T ANY WAY EITHER OF US WOULD EMERGE UNSCATHED!

"LYING THERE, I COULD FEEL MY BLOOD RUN ALONG MY FACE, THE BONES THAT WERE BROKEN IN MY ARM AND HAND--



"AS I WATCHED MY FATHER CARRY AWAY MORITORI REX IN HIS ARMS, IT DID NOT DAWN ON ME UNTIL MUCH LATER--



"--WHEN A KINDLY COUNTRY DOCTOR I HAD STUMBLED ACROSS DETERMINED THE FULL EXTENT OF MY INJURIES--

Hmmm!

YOUR VISION IS SERIOUSLY DETERIORATING!

I MAY HAVE TO OPERATE!

AS THE YEARS ROLLED INTO DECADES, EVENTUALLY I HAD "NEW" EYES IMPLANTED SO I COULD SEE AGAIN... DESPITE OUR DISDAIN FOR TECHNOLOGY. THAT'S WHEN IT DAWNED ON ME--



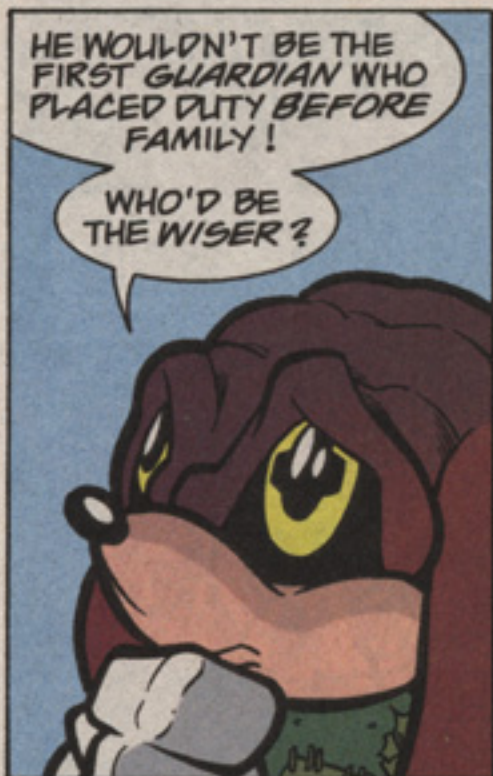
--THAT I REALIZED THE NATURE OF REX'S INJURIES MAY HAVE ALLOWED HIM TO EASILY FOOL THE FAMILY!



BUT TO FOOL THE FAMILY FOR SO LONG? HOW?

HE COULD'VE FEIGNED MEMORY LOSS FOR STARTERS!

BECOME MORE ALOOF IN THE PROCESS!



HE WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST GUARDIAN WHO PLACED DUTY BEFORE FAMILY!

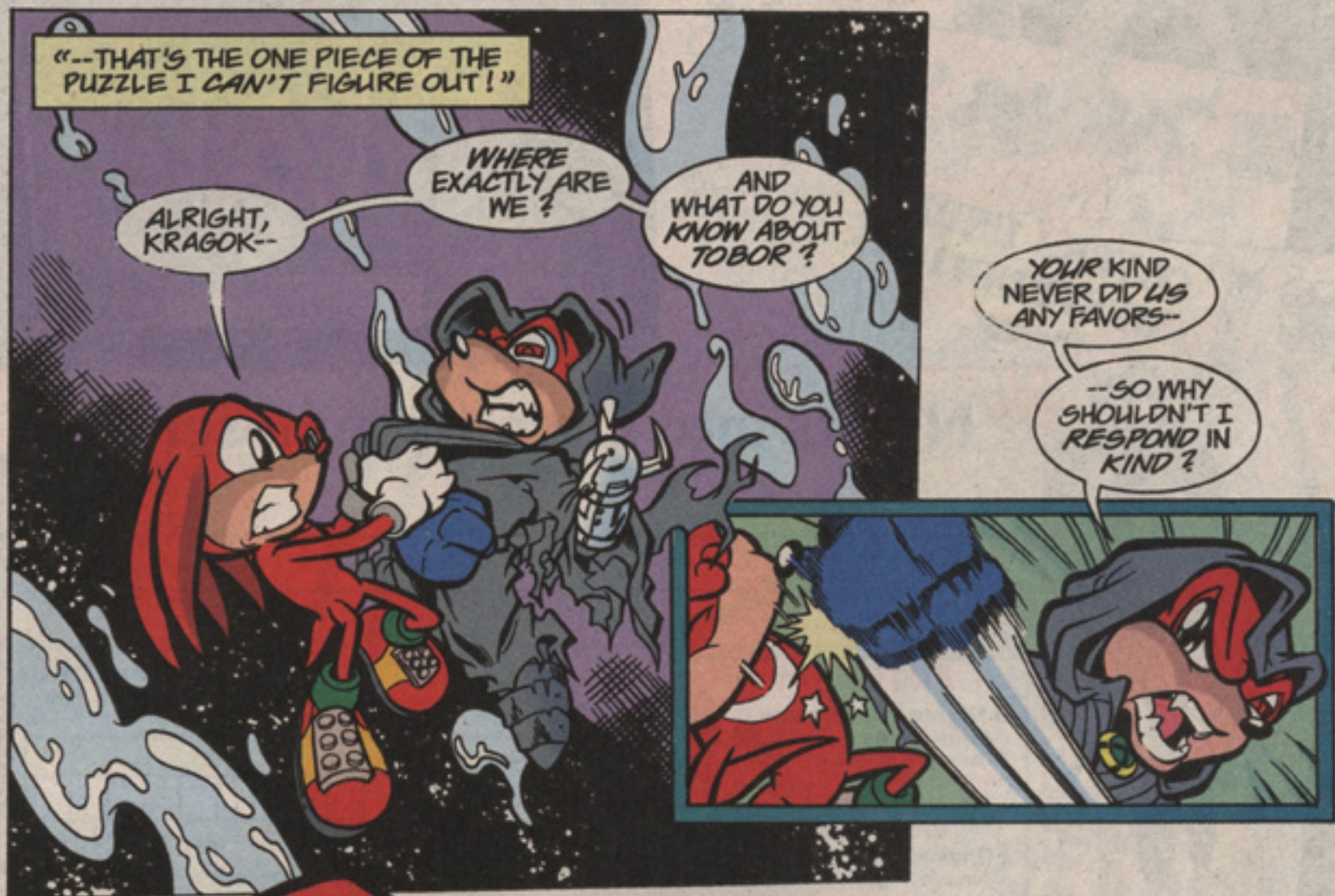
WHO'D BE THE WISER?



WHAT ABOUT YOUR WIFE, VONI-CA?

I WOULD THINK SHE WOULD RECOGNIZE AN IMPOSTER!

AS MUCH AS I'VE AGONIZED OVER THAT POINT, DARLING LARA--





"--IF THEY WERE TO SENSE WEAKNESS, THEY WOULD NOT HESITATE TO STRIKE!"

I'LL TALK ALRIGHT! NOT THAT IT'LL DO YOU MUCH GOOD!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THE STORY ABOUT DIMITRI?

WELL--

I WAS TOLD HE ATTEMPTED TO USE THE POWER OF THE CHAOS EMERALDS FOR HIS OWN PURPOSES UNTIL HIS BROTHER, EDMUND OPPOSED HIM.*



* SEE "A SENSE OF HISTORY" IN SONIC #35 AND #36.-- JUSTIN

EDMUND ENDED UP BECOMING THE FIRST GUARDIAN--AND MY ANCESTOR!

AS FOR DIMITRI, HE WOUND UP TRANSFORMING INTO ENERJAK--



--UNTIL MAMMOTH MOGUL WOUND UP CLEANING HIS CLOCK!*

*IN SONIC #56--SFG

AND THAT'S IT?

YOU GOT ME!

FAMILY HISTORY WAS NEVER MY STRONG POINT!

IT WAS WITH US!



DIMITRI HAD A SON, MENNIKER, WHO FOUNDED THE DARK LEGION AND TOOK HIS REVENGE ON EDMUND!

UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM--

"EDMUND'S SON, STEPPENWOLF, MASTERED THE POWER OF CHAOS ENERGY, USING IT TO EXILE MENNIKER AND THE DARK LEGION INTO THIS ZONE WE'RE IN NOW..."



"PERIODICALLY, WE WOULD MANAGE TO ESCAPE, ONLY TO BE THWARTED BY WHICHEVER GUARDIAN WE MET UP WITH AT THE TIME..."



"WHETHER WE EXPERIENCED TIME MORE SLOWLY OR SIMPLY MOVED THROUGH TIME, WHO CAN SAY, BUT WE LIVED ONE GENERATION FOR EVERY FOUR OF YOURS!"



"IT WAS THEN THAT MY FATHER, MORITORI REX, WHILE IN THIS PARTICULAR ZONE, DISCOVERED THAT HE WAS ABLE TO WATCH OTHERS IN ANOTHER ZONE!"

"SINCE HE COULD SEE THEM, BUT THEY COULDN'T SEE HIM, HE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS..."



"THE GUARDIAN HE WATCHED WAS THEN LURED INTO A TRAP AND DEFEATED, LEAVING MY FATHER IN THE POSITION TO IMPERSONATE HIM AND CONQUER FROM WITHIN..."



THE GUARDIAN YOUR FATHER DEFEATED-- IT WAS TOBOR, WASN'T IT?

YES! YES! THINGS WERE A MESS ON THE FLOATING ISLAND BACK THEN--

-- SO WHO WOULD KNOW?

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW?

WASN'T IT?!

AND YOUR FATHER? WHERE IS HE NOW?

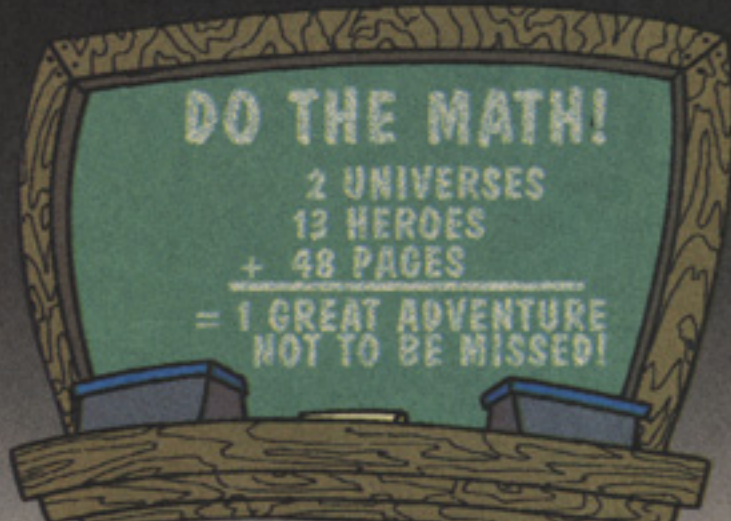


OVER THERE!

HUH?







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--WHILE
I GO TO HIS
AIDE!

WAIT!!!

WHAT'S
HAPPENING TO
MY SON ?!!

NOT EVEN AN
"EXCUSE ME!"

IS IT
ALWAYS LIKE
THIS ?

JULIE-SU--

"--I THINK WE HAVE
TO TALK"!

ASTONISHING!

KNUCKLES IS
PROJECTING FROM
ANOTHER ZONE SO
INTENSELY--

--THAT MY CYBERNETIC
VISION IMPLANTS CAN
READ HIS IMAGE!

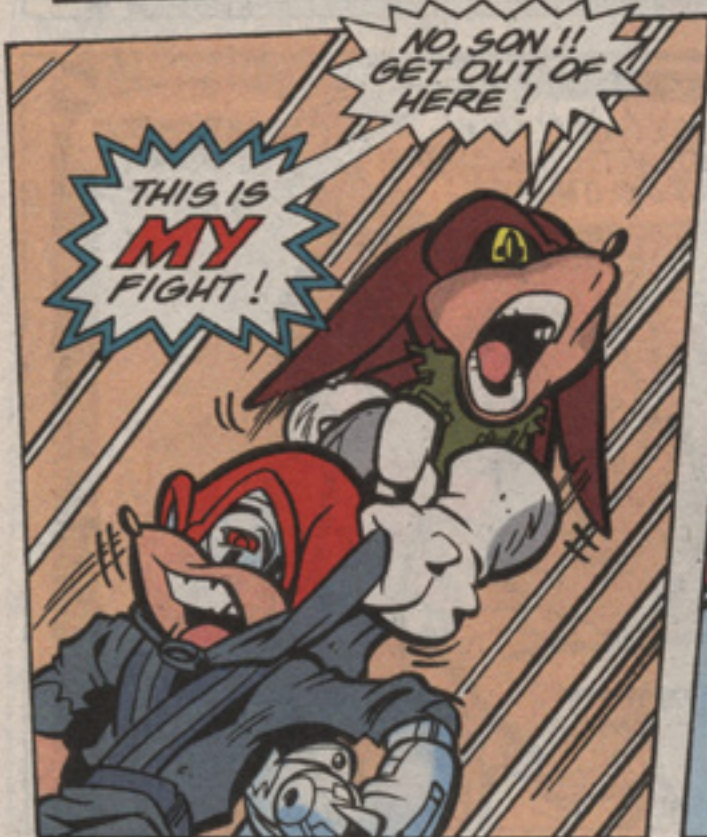
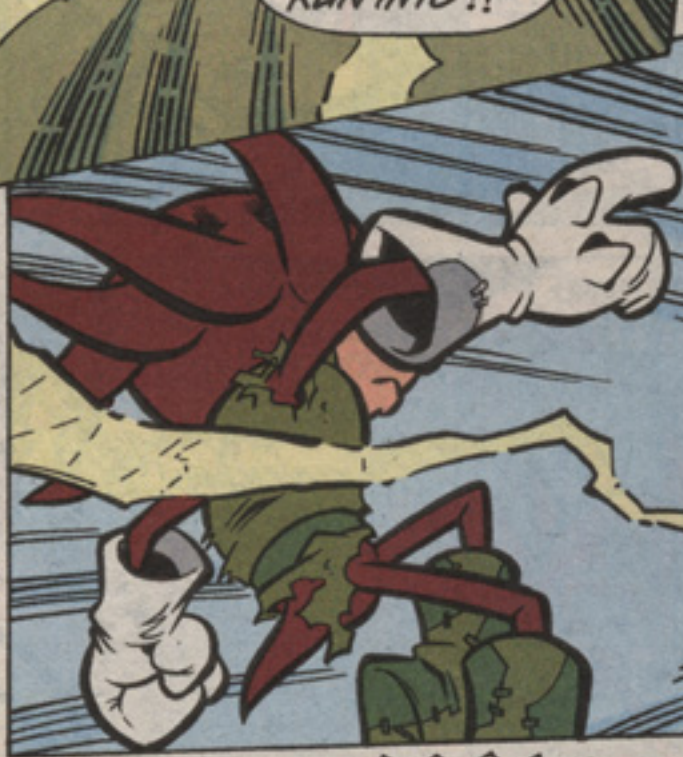
I'M REGISTERING SO MUCH
CHAOS ENERGY, IT'S AS IF
KNUCKLES WERE A LIVING
CHAOS EMERALD!

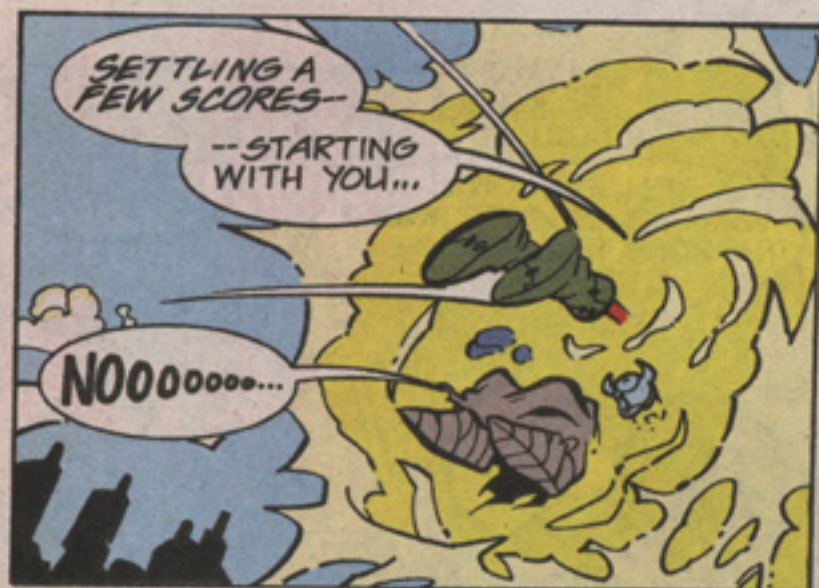
I CAN'T RECALL
ANY GUARDIAN BEING
ABLE TO WIELD THAT
MUCH POWER!

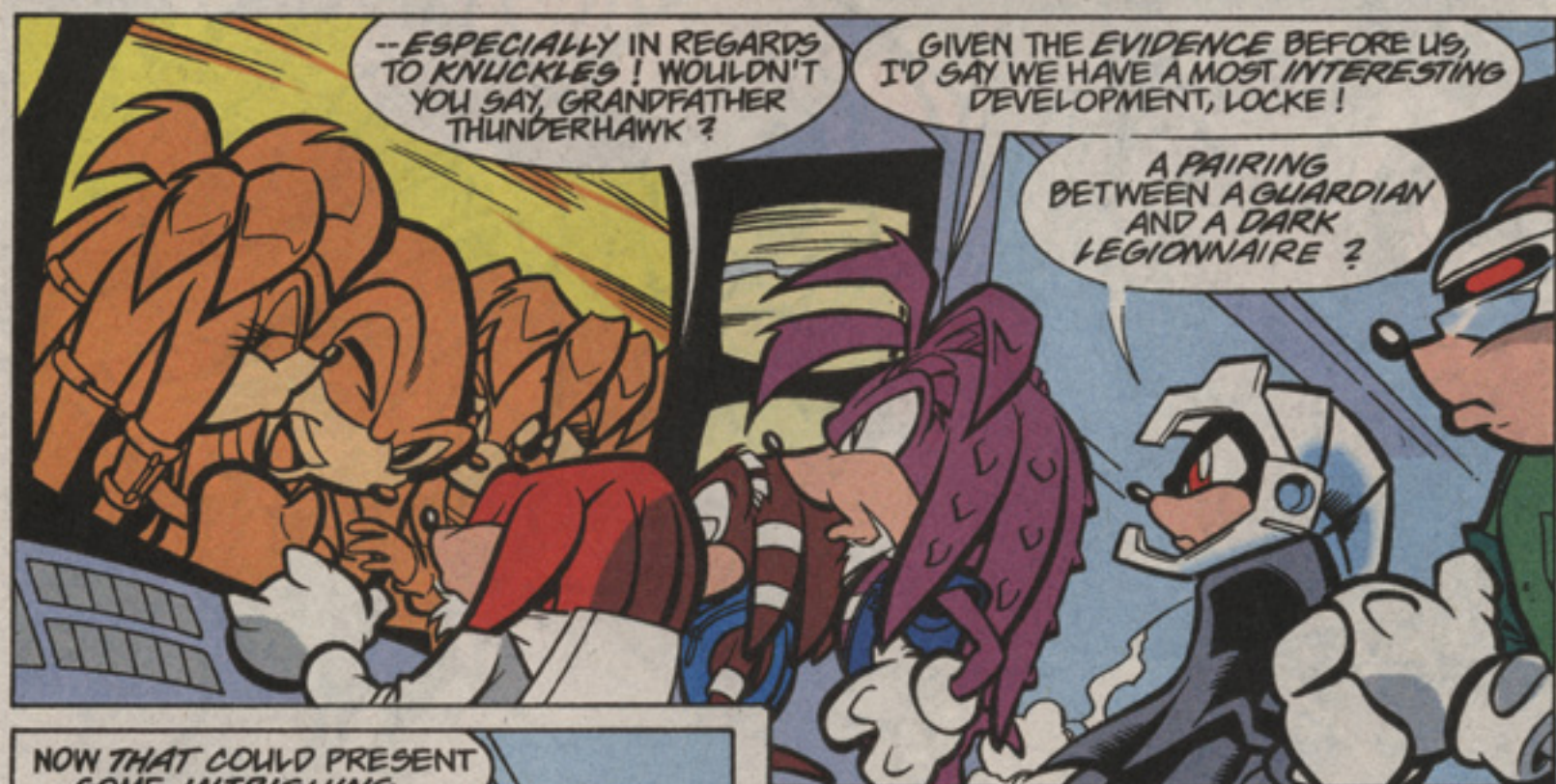
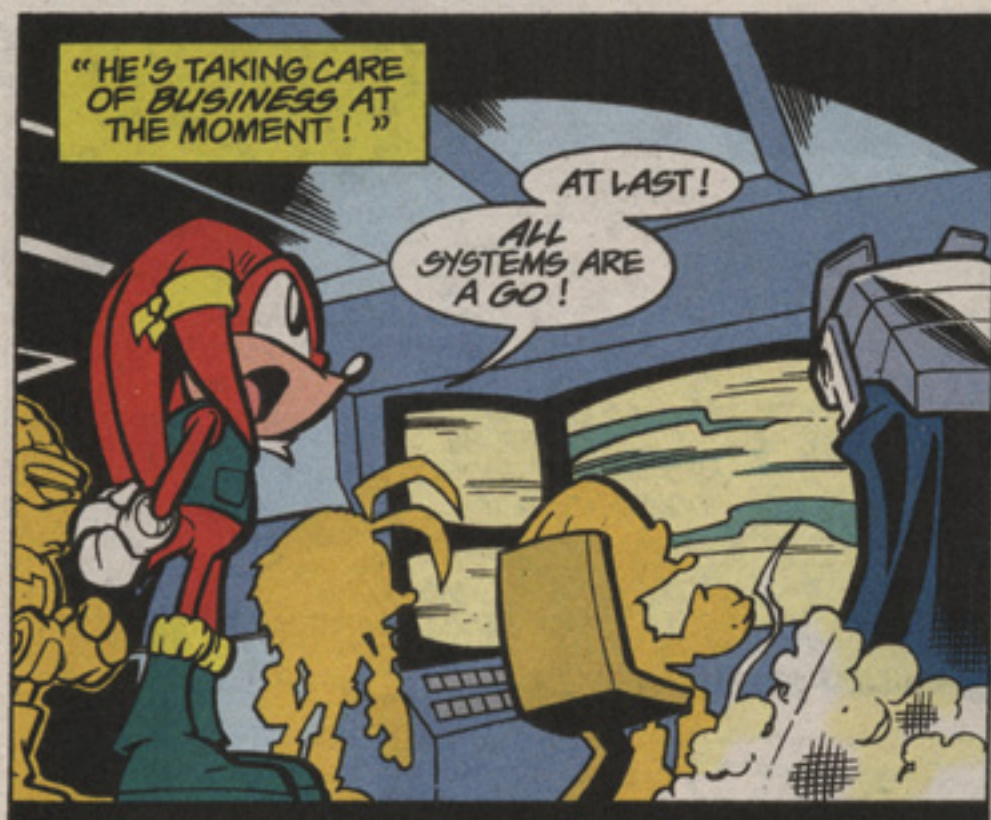
WHATEVER'S
OCCURRING IS ABOUT TO
CROSSOVER BACK TO
THIS REALITY!

I'M REGISTERING
A LIFEFORM EMERGING
THROUGH THAT NEXUS!

CAN IT
BE--







I'LL
TAKE IT UNDER
ADVISEMENT,
FATHER!

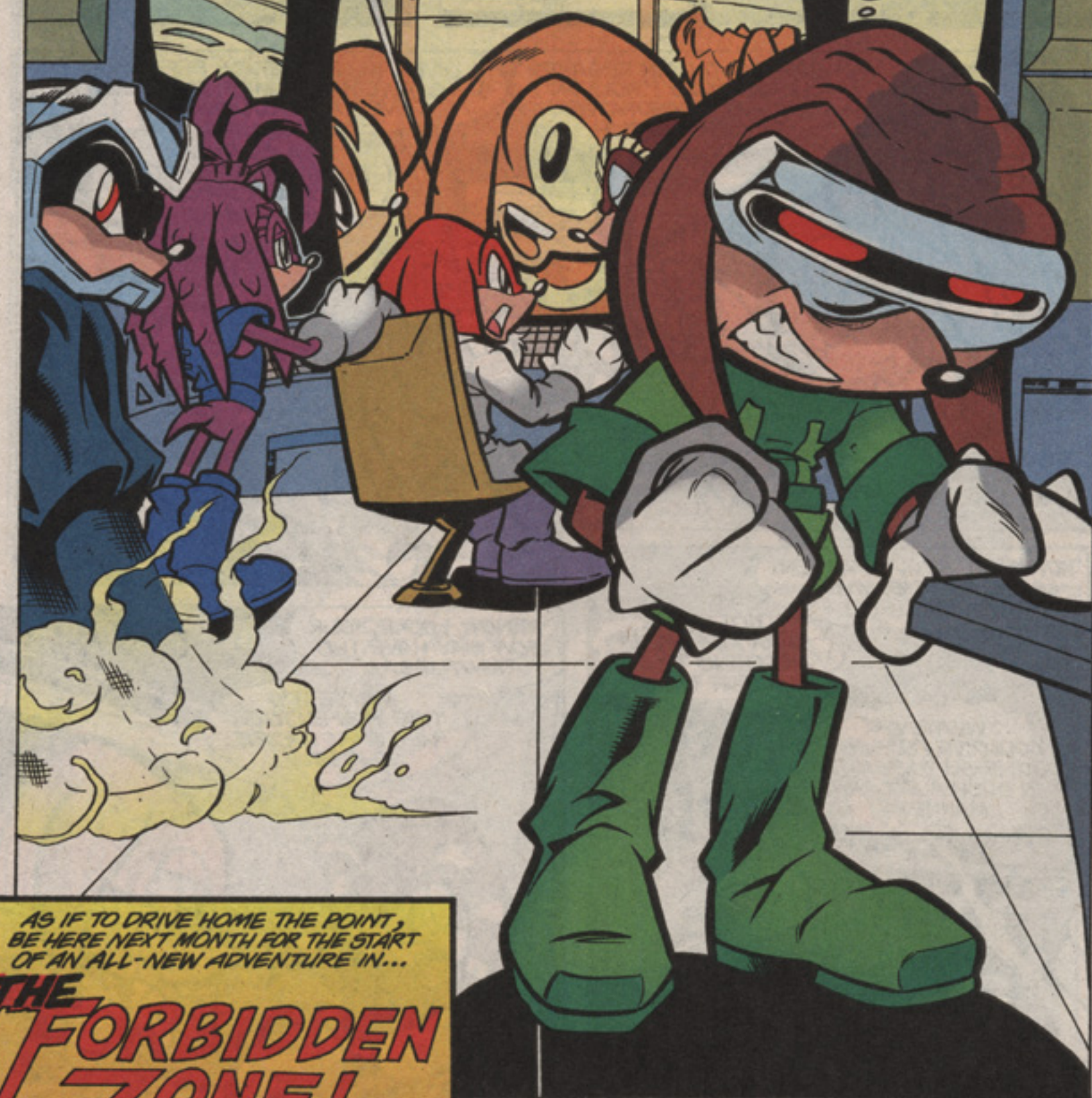
IN THE
MEANTIME, I'M
CONTENT SIMPLY
KNOWING THAT
EVERYTHING IS CALM
AND PEACEFUL
FOR THE TIME
BEING!

MAYBE YOU
CAN RELAX,
LOCKE, BUT I
CAN'T!

NOT WHEN THAT
OLD FOOL, TOBOR, IS
NOWHERE IN SIGHT!

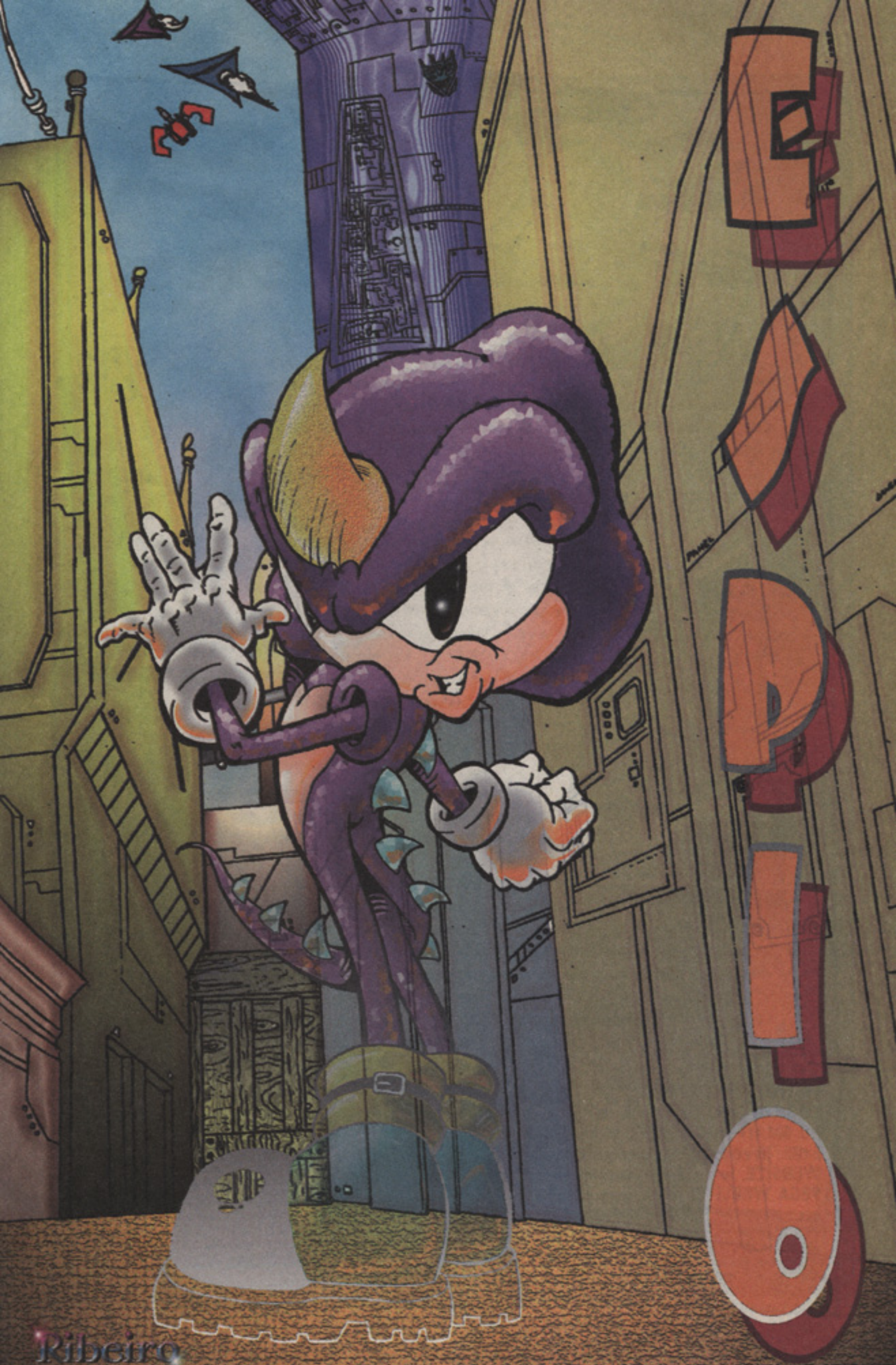
AS OF NOW,
I'D BETTER BE
READY FOR EVERY
CONTINGENCY--

AS
ANYTHING
COULD HAPPEN
NEXT!



AS IF TO DRIVE HOME THE POINT,
BE HERE NEXT MONTH FOR THE START
OF AN ALL-NEW ADVENTURE IN...

**THE
FORBIDDEN
ZONE!**



FISTFUL OF LETTERS

JUSTIN F. GABRIE EDITOR

INVASION!

NEXT MONTH: FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO FOLLOW THE ADVENTURES OF SONIC THE HEDGEHOG, YOU'LL REALLY ENJOY THIS NEXT TRILOGY CALLED "THE FORBIDDEN ZONE!" WE GET DOWN TO BUSINESS AS GEOFFREY ST. JOHN AND HIS CRACK TEAM OF COMMANDOS TO THE FLOATING ISLAND TO FIND OUT "WHAT HAPPENED TO QUEEN ALICIA?" NOT ONLY DO THEY ENTER KNUCKLES' DOMAIN AT GREAT RISK, BUT THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF A BLIZZARD THAT THREATENS THE VERY ENVIRONMENT OF THE ISLAND! WRITTEN BY KEN PENDERS. ART BY MANNY GALAN AND ANDREW PEPOT. **KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA #19 ON SALE OCTOBER 1998!**

IN OTHER MOBIAN NEWS...



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #65 ON SALE SEPTEMBER 1998!

IN THREE WEEKS: THE NAUGUS TRILOGY (PART TWO OF THREE)

HEADS INTO FULL SWING AS AN ALLIANCE IS FORMED BETWEEN SONIC, TAILS, THE MYSTERIOUS NATE MORGAN AND THE SNOW-BOT — TO CONFRONT A COMMON FOE, THE SORCERER SAVANT IXIS NAUGUS! ALSO, THE QUESTION "WHO IS NATE MORGAN?!" IS REVEALED! STORY BY KARL BOLLERS WITH ART BY STEVEN BUTLER AND PAM EKLUND. ALSO: A SOLO STORY FEATURING AMY ROSE AND DULCY THE DRAGON AS THEY UNCOVER A HIDDEN LIBRARY IN THE BOWELS OF MOBOTROPOLIS! BY KEN PENDERS AND ART MAWHINNEY. **SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #65 ON SALE SEPTEMBER 1998!**

AND IN FIVE WEEKS: SONIC, KNUCKLES AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS MEET THE HEROES OF IMAGE COMICS! NO, IT'S NOT A DREAM, NOR A HOAX, NOR AN IMAGINARY STORY! THE TRUTH IS NOT ONLY OUT THERE — IT'S WAY OUT THERE AS THE MASTER EMERALD, THE POWER SOURCE THAT MAINTAINS THE FLOATING ISLAND'S PLACE IN THE SKY, IS

STOLEN BY A MYSTERIOUS ENEMY. SONIC AND THE GANG HIT THE COSMIC INTERSTATE IN SEARCH OF THE PRICELESS GEM. WHERE THEY WIND UP IS A WORLD UNLIKE ANY THEY'VE SEEN BEFORE AS THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN THE MEAN STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY AND BEYOND, TEAMING UP WITH AN ASSORTMENT OF HEROES SUCH AS SHADOWHAWK, THE SAVAGE DRAGON, THE MAXX AND OTHERS IN AN EFFORT TO RESTORE THINGS TO THE WAY THEY USED TO BE. CAN THEY DO IT OR WILL THE BAD GUYS WIN OUT IN THIS 48-PAGE EPIC ADVENTURE? TRUST NO ONE BUT THE CREATIVE TEAM OF KEN

PENDERS AND JIM VALENTINO FOR THE

ANSWERS TO THIS ONE! **SONIC SUPER SPECIAL #7 ON SALE OCTOBER 1998! TO ORDER, LOOK FOR COUPONS IN THIS VERY ISSUE!**

CATCH YOU ON THE FLIP SIDE!

JUSTIN
FREDDY
GABRIE

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FISTFUL OF LETTERS!

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BECAUSE OF LIMITED SPACE, THE EDITORS CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT ALL CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE PUBLISHED AND RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT MESSAGES AS THEY SEE FIT.



NOTE: DUE TO AN OVERWHELMING AMOUNT OF E-MAIL, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO REPLY PERSONALLY TO EACH AND EVERY MESSAGE. HOWEVER, YOUR OPINIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO US AND EACH MESSAGE WILL BE READ. THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING!

THE FOLLOWING IS EASILY THE LETTER OF THE MONTH. IN FACT, WE'LL MAKE IT A REGULAR FEATURE. SO PULL OUT YOUR PENS AND PAPERS, TYPEWRITERS, OR KEYBOARDS AND SEND US LETTERS DISCUSSING A SPECIFIC ISSUE OR ISSUES WITH YOUR LIKES AND DISLIKES AND WHY? SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO... TAKE IT AWAY, LIEN NGUYEN:

DEAR MR. PENDERS & MR. GABRIE,

HERE I WILL EXPOUND WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THE COMIC KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA AND MY REASONS FOR IT. TO START OFF, WHAT I FIND CAPTIVATING IS KNUCKLES' BECOMING, GETTING CLOSER TO HIS IDENTITY AS A GUARDIAN, AND HOW IT CONSTITUTES AND AFFECTS THE PERSON WHO HE IS. BACK WHEN IT SEEMED HE WAS THE LAST ECHIDNA ON THE PLANET MOBIUS, I SAW HIM AS A LONELY CREATURE. I FELT SAD AND HOPED THERE WOULD BE MORE FOR HIM. I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS EXPERIENCING IN FEELING AND THOUGHT. AFTER READING THE TRULY TOUCHING AND HEARTRENDING STORY "FATHERS AND SONS" IN SUPER SONIC VS. HYPER KNUCKLES SPECIAL #1, I FELT THAT I UNDERSTOOD HIM BETTER AND I LOVED HIM FOR IT. HIS STRENGTH OF DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE HIS GOALS JUST ARRANTLY GRIPPED MY HEART. STILL TODAY WITH THE RETURN OF ECHIDNAOPOLIS, I SEE HIM SET

APART FROM EVERYONE ELSE, ISOLATED IN THE CONVOLUTED FRAMEWORK CONSTRUCTED AROUND HIM. THAT CONCERNS MY NEXT POINT: JULIE-SU. SHE, LIKE KNUCKLES, IS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS BEEN "CAST OFF" FROM WHERE SHE WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE LIVED. IF AND WHEN THEY DO FALL IN LOVE, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING BECAUSE OF WHERE THEY CAME FROM (HIM BEING A GUARDIAN WHILE SHE'S FROM THE DARK LEGION). THEN THERE IS THE ISSUE OF KNUCKLES' PARENTS, LOCKE AND LARA-LE. THERE IS A BITTER TENSION BETWEEN THEM THAT CREATES A COMPOSITION-PRESENTING DRAMA IN WHICH PATHOS IS EMINENT AND PENETRATING. ALSO, ANOTHER FAMILY TENSION CONCERNS ATHAIR AND THE REST OF THE GUARDIANS: A PROBLEM IN THE PAST THAT CONTINUES TO AFFECT KNUCKLES TODAY. THIS SERIES PAYS CLOSE ATTENTION TO HOW HISTORY PLAYS A ROLE IN THE PRESENT WORLD. THE MYSTIQUE OF KNUCKLES HAVING BEEN "PREORDAINED" WITH FOES (SUCH AS ENERJAX, KRAGOK AND THE DARK LEGION) SIMPLY BECAUSE HE'S A GUARDIAN. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE CHAOTIX PLAY A BIGGER ROLE IN KNUCKLES' LIFE AS HE REALLY NEEDS FRIENDS HE CAN TALK TO AND ASSOCIATE WITH IN A CLOSE AND PERSONAL WAY. YOUR STORIES HAVE SHOWN US WHAT IT TRULY MEANS TO BE GUARDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND, AND THAT IT IS KNUCKLES! I DO HAVE ONE QUESTION: WHO WAS THE OTHER GUARDIAN WITH HAWKING IN KNUCKLES THE GUARDIAN #5, PAGE 13? WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR READING MY LETTER. I LOVE KNUCKLES AND AM IMMENSELY GRATEFUL THAT

YOU CONSIDER US FANS A GREAT PART OF YOUR COMICS. MY ONE REQUEST IS THAT I'D LIKE TO REACH OUT AND GET TO KNOW MY FELLOW KNUX AFICIONADOS OUT THERE (I WOULD REALLY APPRECIATE HEARING FROM YOU) SO PLEASE PRINT MY FULL ADDRESS:

KNUCKLES LOVER LIEN
1565 GRAPEVINE LANE
VISTA, CA 92083-5574

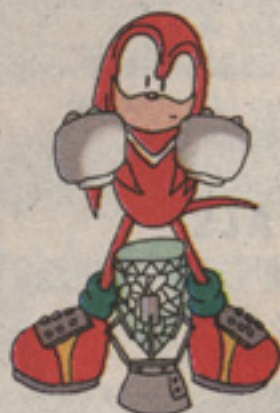
YOU'VE COVERED SO MANY POINTS ABOUT OUR FAVORITE ECHIDNA THAT YOU'VE DEFINITELY SHOWN US ALL HOW MUCH KNUCKLES MEANS TO YOU. WITH FANS SUCH AS YOURSELF, HOW CAN WE GO WRONG? TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, LIEN, THAT GUARDIAN WAS NONE OTHER THAN TOBOR BEFORE THE EVENTS LEADING TO HIS SELF-IMPOSED EXILE. THINGS OF COURSE WILL GET EVEN MORE INTERESTING WITHIN THE COMING MONTHS. DON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE AS WE HEAD TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FIFTH ISSUE! AMAZING, ISN'T IT?

**SO UNTIL NEXT
MONTH, STAY COOL!**

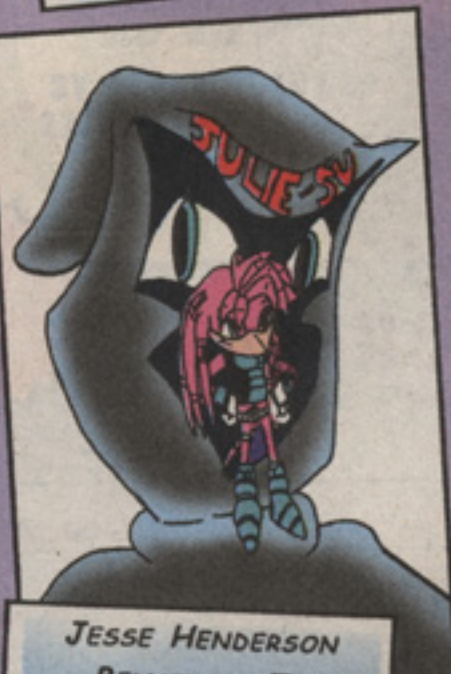
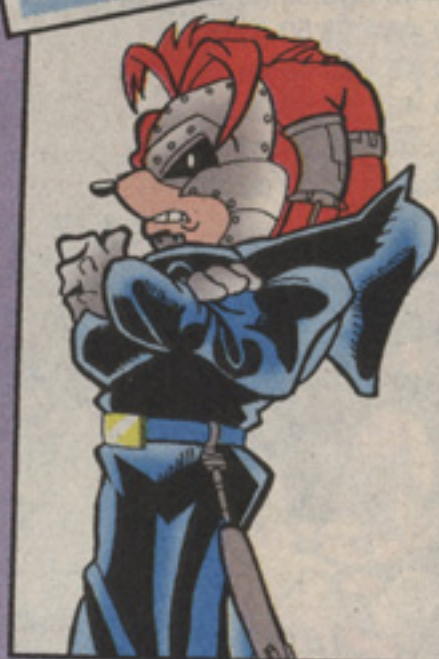
FAN KNUCKLES ART

YOUR MESSING WITH
ONE CRAZY ECHIDNA

LEIGH MICHAEL HARRISON
"LEEZER BEEZER" (AGE 13)
NIAGARA-ON-THE LAKE, CANADA



JEAN LUC
"SUPER SONIC"
PILON



JESSE HENDERSON
BELLVILLE, TX

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